

May 2003

Issue 2

www.fs.fed.us/kipz

USDA FOREST SERVICE

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Key Points

The KIPZ has released the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) and Technical Report.

Upcoming Community Meetings Schedule—see page 3.

Seven revision topics have been identified but we still need your help in refining the issues.

How Can I Stay Informed—see page 5.

Please note: We are encouraging YOU to access planning documents via our website—see page 5.



Forest Plan Revision News

Update

Since our last newsletter, much has been happening with our Forest Plan Revision effort. We had our first round of thirteen open house public meetings last June. Approximately 250 people attended the open houses throughout Idaho, northwestern Montana, and Washington, where a variety of comments were voiced. The comments ranged from recreation, access, wildlife, and road issues to the Forest Service contribution to local economies, and all issues in between. The objective of these open houses was to gather public concerns and comments on what we should address in the revision of these Forest Plans. For a complete list of the comments, go to our website: www.fs.fed.us/kipz.

The Planning Team also just completed a report called the “Analysis of the Management Situation” (AMS). The AMS and accompanying Technical Report describe the historic and current condition of National Forest land within the KIPZ and discusses direction in the 1987 Forest Plans that needs to be changed. These documents are available on our website, on compact disc, and for review at all Forest Service offices and libraries. The AMS is described in further detail on pages 3-4.

The **scoping comment period has been open since April 30, 2002 and we will begin analyzing comments that we’ve received to-date after May 30, 2003.** The AMS is a source of information about the revision topics and issues identified so far. Reviewing this document can help you understand these issues, which may help in identifying any issues that we may have missed.

Want To Know More?

Where Can I Get Information and Documents?

In order to provide information in a timely and efficient manner, and to cut the expensive costs of printing and mailing, we are encouraging everyone to access our website for the most current information and planning documents: www.fs.fed.us/kipz. The planning documents will also be available on compact disc, and for review at your local library and all Forest Service offices within the KIPZ. See Mailing List information on the next page.

REVISION SCHEDULE

Jan-May, 2003	Public scoping, including open house meetings.
April, 2003	The Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) completed. Begin Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
May-Sept., 2003	Community meetings.
Fall, 2004	Release Draft EIS with 90-day public review and comment period.
Fall, 2005	Issue Final EIS. Publish two Records of Decision (ROD) with two revised Forest Plans.

“E-mail” or “Regular-Mail” Mailing Lists — What does it mean to be on one of these lists?

If you want to receive information from us, you have two options. **With either option, you “MUST” return the coupon attached to this newsletter or you will not receive any more information from us on Forest Plan Revision. You will still be able to access information on our website www.fs.fed.us/kipz.**

The **first option**, which we are encouraging because of cost to the government and timeliness, is to access information and our documents on our website. In addition, you may request to be on our **“e-mail” mailing list** by either subscribing on our website or completing the coupon attached to this newsletter (see page 5) and returning it to us. If you are on our email mailing list, you will get an email when a document or major information is added to our website.

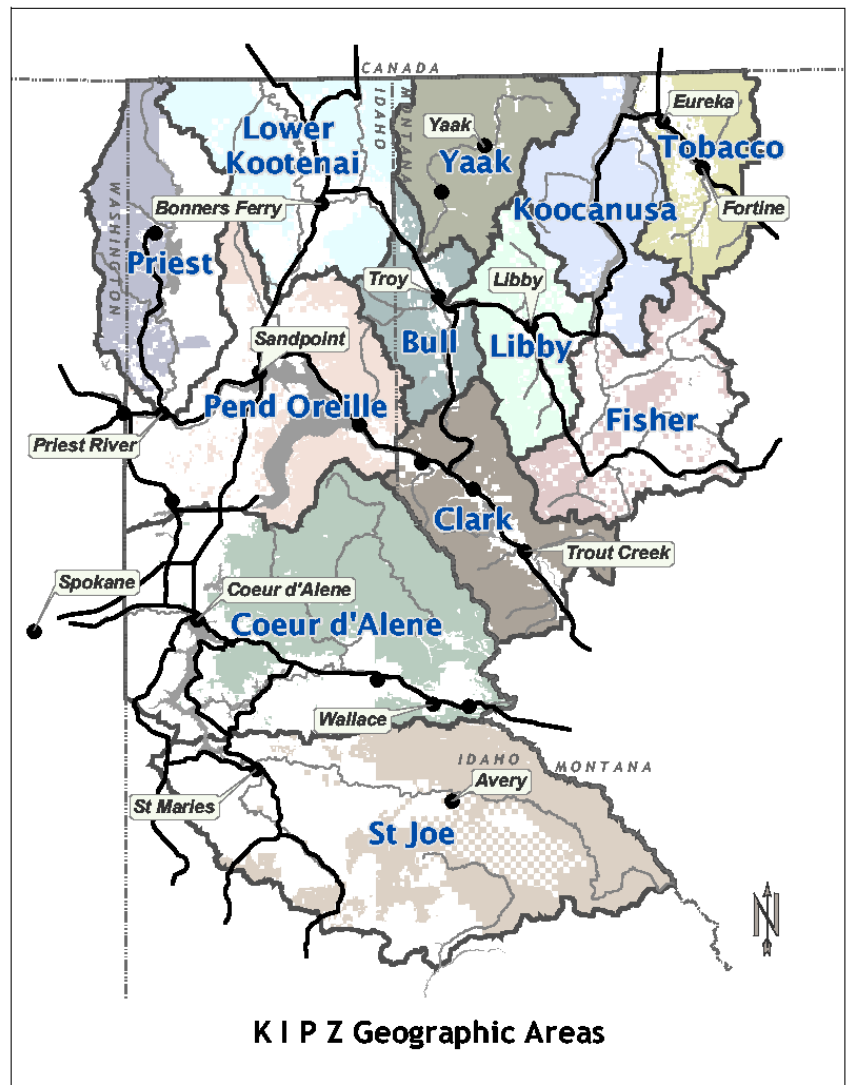
The **second option** is to be on our **“regular-mail” mailing list**. If you don't have access to our website, your local library, or Forest Service office, and if you want to continue to receive information on Forest Plan Revision, you must return the coupon attached to this newsletter. You need to know what this means...you will receive periodic newsletters and notification that a document is available on our website, on compact disc, at your local library, or Forest Service office.

Upcoming Community Meetings

The next round of community meetings are scheduled to start addressing questions as fundamental as **“How will we manage and how do you want to use your National Forests?”**. The meetings are set up by Geographic Areas (GAs), which are intended to be areas where people are interested in how we manage that piece of the National Forest. We really want to hear your concerns, desires, and issues tied to places on the forest that have meaning and value for you. This will help our planning team in developing appropriate management direction for our forests.

The objectives of the Community meetings are to:

- 1) Encourage people with a variety of interests to work with us throughout the revision process.
- 2) Explain the Forest Plan revision and community interaction opportunities.
- 3) Explain the Geographic Area (GA) concept, which is basically places on the forest that have meaning and value to you.
- 4) Encourage attendees to identify and prioritize issues within a particular GA.
- 5) Discuss future meetings and participants.



Idaho Panhandle National Forest Meetings:

All meetings start 6:30—8:30 pm (appropriate time zone)

Spokane, WA - Gonzaga Univ. Administration Bldg., 502 E. Boone Ave.	May 27
Moscow, ID - University Inn Best Western 1516 Pullman Road	May 29
St. Maries, ID - Heyburn Elementary School Cafeteria (St. Joe GA)	May 28
CdA, ID - Forest Service (SO) 3815 Schreiber Way (CdA GA)	June 10
Silverton, ID - Wallace Ranger District north of I-90, exit 60 (CdA GA)	June 11
Sandpoint, ID - Sandpoint District Office 1500 Highway 2 (Pend Oreille GA)	June 12
Bonniers Ferry - Bonners Ferry High School Cafeteria (Lower Kootenai GA)	June 17
Priest Lake, ID - Priest Lake District Office cookhouse (Priest Lake GA)	June 19

Kootenai National Forest Meetings:

Eureka, MT - Lincoln Electric Coop Osloski (Fairgrounds) Road (Koocanusa GA)	June 5
Noxon, MT - Emergency Services Building (Clark GA)	June 12
Troy, MT - Troy Ranger Station 1437 US Hwy. 2 N. (Bull GA)	June 16
Libby, MT - VFW Hall, Hwy. 37 (Libby GA)	June 19
Fortine, MT - Fortine Community Church (Tobacco GA)	June 24
Yaak, MT - Upper Yaak Work Center (Yaak GA)	June 26
Happy's Inn, MT - Happy's Inn Fire Hall, Hwy. 2, (Fisher GA)	June 30

Analysis of the Management Situation Highlights (AMS)

The National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA) requires each National Forest to have a Forest Plan. A Forest Plan is the basic document that guides how the natural resources of a National Forest are managed for the American people. They must be consistent with environmental laws and regulations such as the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Water Act.

One of the first steps in Forest Plan Revision is to complete an Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS). The AMS and Technical Report are a collection and analysis of data describing monitoring and evaluation findings; historic and current condition and trends for each revision topic; and applicable information from current science and assessments. This information is then used to establish the need for revising the 1987 Forest Plans and assist in the development of a range of alternatives as we move through the planning process.

Seven revision topics have been identified through our daily contacts with people who work and recreate on our National Forests, monitoring and evaluation, and current science and assessments. The Revision topics are broad categorizations which may cover one or more of the significant issues that we've heard currently and over the years.

The revision topics are: 1) vegetation, 2) fire risk, 3) timber production, 4) wildlife, 5) watersheds and aquatic species, 6) inventoried roadless areas and proposed wilderness areas, and 7) access and recreation.

The AMS will help the agency and public better understand these revision topics that will be used as a basis for developing alternatives. In the AMS document, you will find specific information on the 1) Need for change; 2) Implications of continuing under current management direction; and 3) Possible strategies in revising the management direction for each revision topic.

Following are some of the reasons we need to change management direction for each of the revision topics:

Topic 1 — Vegetation

- Historically dominated by long-lived, shade-intolerant, fire adapted tree species (ponderosa pine, western larch and western white pine).
- Currently dominated by drought, fire sensitive, and shade tolerant tree species (grand fir and western hemlock) and short-lived species (Douglas-fir & lodgepole pine).
- Reduction from historic conditions:
 - Snags (dead trees still standing).
 - Old growth forests
- Increase from historic conditions:
 - Noxious weeds
 - Down-woody debris on the forest floor.
- 3 new Threatened and Endangered plants.

Topic 2 — Fire Risk

- Decades of active fire suppression have altered some ecosystems by increasing fuel levels beyond an acceptable range.
- More homes and other structures have been built near and around National Forests. These structures within the Wildland Urban Interface, are very vulnerable should fires occur. As people, homes and other structures continue to occupy the Wildland Urban Interface and as hazardous fuels continue to accumulate, the fire risk increases.
- Need to restore fire adapted ecosystems which are outside the historic range.
- Need to incorporate national fire management strategies completed in recent years.

Topic 3 — Timber Production

- The timber production levels have been well below those projected in the 1987 Forest Plans. The levels of timber volume sold have declined substantially. There is a need to reanalyze timber harvest levels and revise direction to address change in management philosophy.

IPNF: Projected a total maximum timber volume of 280 mmbf annually. Total volumes have decreased from 246.4 mmbf in 1988 to 40.7 mmbf in 2001 .

KNE: Projected a total maximum timber volume of 227 mmbf annually. Total volumes have declined from 200 mmbf to 50 mmbf per year from fiscal 1988 to 2001.

- Many factors have influenced the timber program such as: legal challenges, USF&WS biological opinion for the grizzly bear, the Inland Native Fish Strategy (INFISH), reduction in forest budgets, water quality concerns, inventoried roadless area management and many other resource related issues.

Topic 4 — Wildlife

- Changes in vegetation structure, pattern and composition have changed the amount and type of wildlife habitat available.
- Some wildlife habitats are in short supply.
- Recovery of grizzly bear, caribou, lynx and other T&A access management for these species continues to evolve.
- Species listed as threatened and endangered have changed (ie. Peregrine falcon removed, Canada lynx added).
- New and/or updated laws, regulations, and management strategies contain additional measures for managing habitats at a much broader scale.

Topic 5 — Watersheds and Aquatic Species

- To establish management direction that recognizes and emphasizes watershed restoration. Current scientific findings, Forest Service policies and direction, and priorities from other agencies that manage water resources need to be brought together to construct strategies for watershed activities.
- Physical and biological components of watershed systems have changed.
 - States of MT and ID have listed 168 water bodies as impaired.
 - 25% of watershed in “Not Properly Functioning” condition, additionally 50% are “Functioning at Risk”.
 - 6 fish species & 3 amphibian species are listed as threatened, endangered or sensitive.

Topic 6 — Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) and Proposed Wilderness Areas

- Continued controversy associated with management of IRAs.
- There are 91 IRAs on the KIPZ totaling almost 1.5 million acres — 1/3 of the KIPZ.
- Forest Plans need to reflect current Forest Service direction on roadless area management. This direction referred to as the “Roadless Rule” is a national effort by the Forest Service to examine and set management direction for roadless areas.

Topic 7 — Access and Recreation

- Access to NFS lands is one of the most controversial topics in forest management.
- Motorized and non-motorized modes of travel have increased and diversified.
- User demands and technological advancements in recreational equipment has resulted in forest users accessing areas that were not accessible in the past and pursuing recreational activities in ways that were not possible historically. The advent of mountain bikes and all terrain vehicles, the growing popularity of four-wheel-drive vehicles and snowmobiles, and increasing non-motorized uses such as hiking, back-country skiing and snow shoeing are all competing for the same land base.
- Increased recreation demands sometimes conflicts with other management objectives (ie. wildlife security, TES recovery, road management etc.)

Other Revision Items

Initial evaluation of the 1987 Forest Plan direction for the following issues suggest only minor changes may be needed:

Wild and Scenic Rivers
Research Natural Areas
Special Interest Areas
Heritage Resources
Scenery Management

Lands
Facilities
Minerals
Air Quality
Designated Wilderness
Management

"You've Got Mail!"

The internet is the fastest way to get information about the revision of our Forest Plans. Email notices will be sent to everyone who signs up whenever a major document is added to our website.

Please fill in your email address below or subscribe to this service on our web page at www.fs.fed.us/kipz (OR) if you want to receive hard mail, you need to return coupon below.

Click here to subscribe



What is on the Website?

- News Releases and KIPZ News
- Documents as they are released
- Timeline and Meeting Schedules
- Background Information on Forest Plans
- Maps you can view or print
- Public comments



Fill in the information below and return this to:

USDA Forest Service
KIPZ Revision Team – ATTN: Susan Ague
1101 U.S. Highway 2 West
Libby, MT 59923

email address (please print carefully)

[illegible]

name

organization_

street address_

city _____ state _____ zip _____

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Check here for email mailing list

7

Check here for regular-mail list

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Kootenai National Forest - Willie Sykes, Public Affairs
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Spreading the word: **Feel free to post this newsletter in your office.**
Do you want us to come talk to your group, contact Jodi or Willie.

Website: www.fs.fed.us/kipz (We also encourage anyone to link to our website to provide our Forest Plan information to your website users)

Comments: Please send your scoping comments by May 30, 2003 to:
Email: r1_kipz_revision@fs.fed.us
 (For ease of processing, send comments as an attachment)

Regular Mail: US Forest Service Attn: Susan Ague
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The Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle National Forests (KIPZ) are revising their Forest Plans. We have several methods to keep you informed throughout the process.

We need you to select the best way for us to get information to you. You “must” fill out the card on the reverse side and return to us if you want to continue to get information from us on Forest Plan Revision.

